



Homeland Security Update

Division of Homeland Security

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Inside this issue:

EM of the Year	2
Fire Prevention Week	3
Local Company Helps Out HLS	3
Hurricane Reports From the Field	4-8
What is EMAC?	4
Dispatching From the Gulf Coast	7
Training Calendar	8

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State Welcomes Evacuees

Cooperation Among Agencies Was Key To Relief Efforts



Left: Col. Scott Olson, Verdi White, AnnaRae Garrett and Pamela Atkinson address the media at a news conference announcing the closure of shelter operations at Camp Williams.

Below: Hurricane evacuees board a bus to leave Camp Williams following their stay at the temporary shelter.

They came by the planeload to a state nearly 2,000 miles from their hurricane-ravaged homes.

The first 150 evacuees arrived in Salt Lake City just after 7 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 3, 2005 to a tarmac filled with applauding government and volunteer personnel. For the next three-and-a-half weeks government, business and volunteer organizations provided food, shelter, clothes, daycare, long distance phone service, Internet access, banking services, activities as well as medical, financial and disaster assistance to nearly 600 evacuees.



Quite simply, this enormous effort would have been impossible without the diligence and cooperation of several state and local government agencies, volunteer organizations, businesses, community groups and private citizens. Because listing everyone who deserves credit would be im-

possible here, I offer a heartfelt thank you to all organizations and individuals who sacrificed to make this effort a success.

-Verdi White
Incident Commander, Camp Williams Hurricane Evacuee Shelter

Even A Hurricane Can't Stop CSEPP Exercise

By Wade Mathews
Tooele County Emergency Management

The Deseret Community held a successful annual, full-scale exercise on Sept. 14, 2005 as part of the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP). This year's exercise, how-

Please See CSEPP, Page 7



Workers recover a mock mustard round From Area 10 during the CSEPP exercise.

Buchanan Named Emergency Manager Of The Year

By Nadine Taylor
Office of Emergency Services

The Utah Department of Public Safety recently named Jim Buchanan as Emergency Manager of the Year.

Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. presented Buchanan the award at the annual Public Official's Conference held Aug. 26 in Park City.

Buchanan was given the award for his continued leadership in the state's emergency management community and his outstanding leadership during Spring flooding in Brigham City.

"Jim has always been one of the emergency managers that new emergency managers could call on for advice or questions on how to make their programs better," said Brian Garrett, director of the Utah Department of Public Safety's Division of Homeland Security Office of Emergency Services. "As the president of the Utah Emergency Management Association (UEMA), he's done a great job of working with our office to coordinate projects and build a strong relationship which will benefit both organizations."

Some of those cooperative projects include producing an emergency manager's handbook as well as current development of Emergency Management 101 and Emergency Management For Elected Officials courses.

Buchanan became Brigham City's first emergency services director in September 2000. In addition to developing and implementing an emergency plan for Brigham City, Buchanan's responsibilities

also include oversight of the city's fire and ambulance departments. Buchanan also serves as Brigham City's Fire Marshal and has served with the Brigham City Ambulance Department for 18 years. He is the city's homeland security coordinator and represents Box Elder County on the Northern Utah Homeland Security Coalition's Executive Board.

Prior to joining Brigham City, Buchanan was Autoliv Automotive Safety Products Emergency Response Engineer. His responsibilities included developing and implementing disaster/emergency plans, organizing and training emergency response teams, and developing business continuation plans for the company's manufacturing plants in the U.S., Europe and Japan. Buchanan is a graduate of Weber State College with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a second major in Political Science. He is a category 1 Law Enforcement Officer, graduating from the Washington State Law Enforcement Academy and Everett Washington Technology College. Buchanan is also a Utah Certified Emer-



Gov. Huntsman presents Jim Buchanan with his award.

gency Medical Technician Intermediate. He recently completed requirements from the Utah Fire and Rescue Academy and National Fire Protection Association as a certified Fire Inspector. Buchanan has completed the Professional Development Series (PDS) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and has completed the Community Emergency Response Teams Instructor Trainer course.

Buchanan teaches for Bridgerland Applied Technology College, Utah State University and Weber

State University in emergency response and medical courses.

He is a member of the Utah Emergency Medical Technicians Association, the Box Elder County LEPC and has served on the board of directors with the Utah Emergency Management Association. Buchanan just concluded a two-year term as Chairman of the State of Utah Emergency Response Commission Advisory Committee. He received the 2001 "Best Practices" award from the Division of Comprehensive Emergency Management and UEMA 2004 Member of the Year.

CSEPP

(Continued from page 1)

ever, required more finesse than usual to pull it off. With much of the south recovering from the biggest disaster in our nation's history, and most of FEMA's personnel deployed to the region to respond to hurricane Katrina, word came down from FEMA headquarters that the 2005 exercise was cancelled.

Utah County, Tooele County and Deseret Chemical Depot (DCD) officials discussed the possibilities and decided to go on with the exercise to fulfill Army

requirements and since plans and preparations were already in place.

Instead of being a Federally Managed Exercise, it became an Alternate Year Exercise. State CSEPP Coordinator, Lorin Larsen, agreed to act as the Off-Post Exercise Co-director. The exercise involved several scenarios, including a chemical weapons incident in DCD's storage area, a truck collision resulting in a hazmat spill, and an altercation involving mock evacuees arriving at a decon site. Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) for DCD and Tooele County were activated, as well as the Tooele Community Joint Information Center

(JIC).

The hazmat portion of the exercise occurred on the property line between DCD and Tooele County. The commander of DCD commented how smoothly the unified command structure came together. Players described the scenario as the most realistic drill they'd seen.

This wasn't the first time the annual Deseret CSEPP Exercise faced cancellation. The 2001 exercise was cancelled because of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The Deseret CSEPP Community thanks everyone involved with planning, conducting and participating in this year's exercise.

Fire Agencies Come Together For Prevention Week



Representatives from multiple fire agencies join Gov. Huntsman for the Oct. 6 declaration signing.

By Monica Colby
Office of the State Fire Marshal

Fire agencies from around the state joined forces in early October to battle home fires before they start. Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. signed a declaration Oct. 6, 2005, declaring Oct. 9-15 Fire

Prevention Week. The annual campaign is aimed at educating the public on ways to prevent fires in their homes.

This year's theme was "Use Candles with Care: When You go Out, Blow Out!" Home candle fires have risen even as most other causes of home fires have declined, according to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Fire departments reminded people to make sure candles are out before they leave the room. Other safety messages included keeping candles away from anything flammable, using proper candleholders and keeping candles out of children's reach.

Utah fire departments hosted events to

raise awareness of key fire safety issues and helped attendees prevent fire and fire injuries, especially at home. The Fire Marshal's Office provides free use of four Life Safety Trailers and three Sparky Hazard Houses to Utah fire departments and other safety groups during Fire Prevention Week and throughout the year.

The Life Safety Trailer is a full-sized RV set up like a house. The Sparky Hazard House is an interactive tabletop house. In both the trailer and the house participants learn how to prevent injuries and fires and how to escape a smoke-filled home.

In the trailer participants feel a warm door, see smoke near the ceiling, crawl to the window and crawl down a ladder. In the house participants see a room and hallway fill with smoke and see figures crawl out a door, climb down a window or signal for help.

During Fire Prevention Week the trailer was at 15 events and the houses at three events. For all of October, the trailer was at 34 events and the houses at seven events.

Local Company Donates Laptops To Homeland Security

By Derek Jensen
Division of Homeland Security

State homeland security officials now have six new laptop computers thanks to a Utah Company's generous donation.

Action Target donated six high-powered laptop computers to the Utah Department of Public Safety's Division of Homeland Security (DHLS) that will be used to help state and local authorities prepare for emergency response situations.

This equipment will allow DHLS to access critical geographical information, chemical databases and incident status information during an emergency situation. These laptops will also assist with emergency planning and response coordination with federal, state and regional responders during multi-jurisdictional incidents. Effective communication is critical during emergencies and these laptops will serve as vital components in the information network.

DHLS coordinates emergency management efforts between federal, state and local governments. These efforts include preparedness, recovery, response and mitigation. Homeland security programs are also administered at the division. Public safety professionals at DHLS include experts in emergency planning, training, exercise, investigations, communications, automation, hazardous material response and much more.



Action Target presents six new Dell laptop computers to representatives from the Utah Department of Public Safety's Division of Homeland Security.

DHLS prepares individuals and communities for disasters through outreach and training programs. The division trains nearly 1,000 emergency responders annually in areas such as domestic preparedness, hazardous materials, the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program, professional development and others.

For the last 20 years, Action Target has played a significant role in the training of law enforcement officers throughout Utah and across the country. Action Target continues to provide shooting range equipment and firearms training to all levels of federal, state and local law enforcement, as well as military personnel around the world.

Reports From The Field

DPS Staff Return From Hurricane Katrina Deployments

Editor's Note: 14 DPS personnel were deployed to assist in Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts. Their experiences are detailed in the following trip reports. Ty Bailey recently returned from his EMAC deployment to Louisiana. Details of his trip were not available before publication.



Jody Horn

Educational Program Manager
Division of Homeland Security
Education Development Center

EMAC Assignment: Volunteers and Donations Management

Location: Montgomery, Alabama

Deployment Dates: 9/4/05-9/23/05

My EMAC assignment was to build and implement the State Volunteer and Donations Management Program for Alabama. I was assigned as the Deputy Operations Coordinator for Alabama's Emergency Support Function 14 (ESF 14)—Volunteers and Donations Management—working with the executive management from the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI). This agency recently accepted program responsibilities for volunteer and donations management. The internal relationship with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency was lacking definition and I used various opportunities to help clarify this relationship.

I designed an organizational chart to structure the Volunteer and Donations Management Program. This chart identified the various operational positions and activities of the program. Unfortunately, the Alabama State Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) did not participate in the organizational structure as requested. My job was focused on staff and program management.

The program was administered from three different locations: the GFBCI main office in downtown Montgomery, the Joint

Field Office (JFO) approximately eight miles from GFBCI, and the Multi-Agency Warehouse in Mobile, approximately 170 miles south of Montgomery. At GFBCI, the third floor was established as the call center for the donations hotline. The fifth floor was used to match and coordinate offers of volunteer services and donations of goods via the hotline or on-line registration. Full-time staff continued their daily business activities from the first floor. From the JFO, we facilitated the liaison function using six phone lines and computers. The Multi-Agency Warehouse received donated goods and met specific needs and warehouse delivery requirements on behalf of various organizations (VOADs, local emergency management agencies, FEMA, state, etc.). These goods were inventoried and then distributed to various organizations to meet the needs of those communities impacted by the disaster. Many recognized community and faith-based organizations were recipients of these goods as well as those organizations mentioned above.

I also facilitated major donations of goods from the Utah LDS humanitarian and welfare warehouses in Salt Lake City and the United States Agency for Interna-

tional Development (USAID). I participated in National VOAD (NVOAD) conference calls, FEMA/State Donations Coordinator conference calls, two State VOAD meetings, visited the multi-agency warehouse to establish policies and procedures, and met with Alabama Governor Bill Riley.

Toward the end of my second week an unexpected responsibility was added to the program per the Governor's request. Governor Riley's Office of Constituent Services selected the volunteer and donations hotline as a resource for evacuees to call to inquire about interim housing options that were established by the state. This new responsibility exceeded the scope of the volunteer and donations management program and challenged our ability to respond to the expectations of the public. The hotline, by default, often becomes an information hotline and the operators can adapt somewhat to address many of those calls. They are not, nor could they ever be, trained to respond to disaster housing calls from already frustrated constituents. Fielding disaster-housing questions belongs to FEMA and other organizations involved with housing issues in the state, not a donations hotline.

EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) is an interstate mutual aid compact between 48 states (including Utah), two territories, and the District of Columbia.

The compact allows states experiencing severe disasters to request personnel and resources from participating states. The requesting state covers the following costs for individuals deployed through EMAC:

- Travel
- Housing

What is EMAC?

- Meals/per diem
- Overtime for deployed individuals
- Overtime to cover backfill in the deployed individuals' home agency.

The state sending assistance pays for the regular salary of deployed individuals.

To date, the Utah Department of Public Safety has sent six emergency management specialists and eight dispatchers to various states as a result of Hurri-

cane Katrina.

EMAC legislation is in place in Utah. Utah Department of Public Safety Division of Homeland Security employees have been trained in the EMAC process. EMAC is the recognized mechanism to send assistance to other states in the event of a large-scale disaster.

In the event of such a disaster in Utah, similar assistance from other states would also be available in our state.

For more information on EMAC, visit <http://www.emacweb.org/>

Reports From The Field

My EMAC responsibilities were to plan, assist, organize and improve the State of Mississippi's Donations Management Program under the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). I worked closely with the Multi-Agency Staging Area (MASA), the Volunteer Call Center and the Sorting Center. Katrina stretched the abilities and talents of everyone. With a team of MEMA managers and other EMAC volunteers, we collectively implemented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), organizational accountability, prioritized goals, process improvements, inventory controls and benchmarks.

FEMA representatives and many others recognized Mississippi as the most prepared state in responding to Katrina. Mississippi's response was in large part due to their substantial commitment to emergency management. The state, for example, has dedicated significantly more resources to emergency management than many other states. Additionally, Mississippi quickly and accurately understood that this disaster exceeded their abilities.



John Crofts

Planner
Division of Homeland Security
Office of Emergency Services

EMAC Assignment: Planning Donations Management

Location: Jackson, Mississippi

Deployment Dates: 9/13/05-9/29/05

Mississippi employees delegated authority and work to EMAC volunteers—which enabled everything to move quicker.

Additionally, Chrysler, Nissan and many other companies donated significant resources to the recovery effort. This much needed assistance further cut response time in many instances. AmeriCorp is a program designed to give loans to students who then repay the loans through service to the government. AmeriCorp participants are educated, hard working and extremely efficient in problem solving and fixing problems in disasters. Mississippi utilized AmeriCorp

constantly for the Donations Management effort. Without AmeriCorp, Mississippi donations management could not have reacted quickly.

Working in Mississippi was an honor for me. I saw so many people's lives and possessions literally destroyed. In spite of all the wreckage I witnessed the hope, determination, humor and resolve of many people to pick up the pieces and rebuild. I hope that America's generosity and commitment to our own people continue. We are all part of a vital team. It is a privilege to do our best and to be committed to jobs as emergency management professionals.



Russ Fillmore

Financial Officer
Division of Homeland Security
Office of Administrative Services

EMAC Assignment: Admin/Finance Support

Location: State EOC (Jackson, Mississippi)

Deployment Dates: 9/3/05-9/18/05

My EMAC assignment consisted of admin/finance support at the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Jackson, Mississippi. The extent of the damage along the Mississippi Gulf Coast completely overwhelmed the state of Mississippi as 35-foot waves and hurricane-strength winds crashed into the coastal communities causing extreme flooding damage several miles inland. The Operations Chief at the State EOC compared the destruction caused by the power of Hurricane Katrina to the rebuilding of Germany after World War II where Allied Forces leveled entire communities and the Americans, along with other countries, had to literally rebuild from nothing.

I was one of more than 3,000 civilians and more than 10,000 military personnel deployed through the EMAC program to Mississippi. A week into my assignment, the EMAC mission deployments to Mississippi had easily exceeded over \$200 million. My EOC responsibilities included meal ticket distribution, meal roster maintenance, meal delivery, serving meals with volunteers, stocking refreshment supplies for EOC staff, errand purchasing assistant, filing, purchasing requisition paperwork, answering phones, staging donated vehicles for local jurisdictions, and working with some of the most dedicated emergency management professionals on the face of the planet

I very much value the people I worked

with in Mississippi. Some of them I had worked with previously in Florida and it was good to see their familiar faces. I worked with people who were still working on the Hurricane Dennis disaster, which occurred two months prior. I worked with people who had not had any days off for weeks. I worked with people who were at the verge of resigning their positions because of the toll it was having on them.

I worked with people who despite the disaster, had to prepare themselves to work through two audits, which had been requested. I worked with people who had been deployed to the Gulf for their assignments and had to deal with citizens who had lost it all, including the loss of friends and family.

I worked with people who had lost phone, power and home damage, yet through it all showed up to work each day and gave it their all. I was happy to be in Mississippi and was honored to work with such fine people. I was able to experience the famous southern hospitality first hand and was always treated better than gold. I will always carry a place for my Mississippi friends in my heart.

Reports From The Field

By way of request through FEMA and with approval of the National Coordination Group, I was deployed to the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) at U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/FEMA headquarters in Washington, D.C. My role was to serve as a member of the EMAC National Coordination Team (NCT), which is responsible for coordination of information, and to serve as an EMAC liaison to FEMA, the National Guard and other Emergency Support Functions that comprise the National Emergency Support Team (EST).

Our primary mission was not to actively acquire resources from EMAC member states but to coordinate with Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) in the NEOC, the National Guard and with EMAC A-Teams in the requesting states to ensure that requests for assistance were not being duplicated and that gaps in unmet needs were being addressed.

The NCT consisted of two civilian and three National Guard personnel. We worked 12-hour shifts and were on call the remainder of the time, in the event additional assistance was needed. On a



Rick Williams

Bureau Chief
Division of Homeland Security
Office of Emergency Services

EMAC Assignment: National Coordination Team

Location: National Emergency Operations Center (Washington, D.C.)

Deployment Dates: 9/13/05-9/28/05

daily basis the NCT, along with representatives from each of the ESFs, were required to provide situational briefings. The noon briefings were provided to the President or designated staff, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of FEMA, and the Federal Regional Operations Centers.

The Regional Operations Centers were tied into the NEOC by way of video teleconferencing capabilities. Additional coordination briefings were conducted as needed.

The opportunity to assist with Hurricanes Katrina, Ophelia and Rita at FEMA Headquarters and to be co-located with the ESFs in the NEOC, has given me a much greater appreciation for FEMA and

their mission. They performed admirably and did everything they possibly could to provide support for the hurricane victims.

Based on experiences at the NEOC, I believe that careful consideration should be given to the State of Utah Emergency Operations Plan and how we interface with the federal government during times of emergency or disaster.

There needs to be a way for the federal government to come into the state and plug into our emergency management system.

By incorporating ESF concepts into the State Emergency Operations Plan, I believe confusion will be reduced and overall response and coordination will be greatly enhanced.



Randy Cooper

CSEPP Trainer
Division of Homeland Security
Office of Emergency Services

EMAC Assignment: EMAC A-Team

Location: Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Deployment Dates: 9/23/05-10/8/05

My duties for the first three days were to input records on the Web and filing. The remainder of the time I was assigned as the EOC EMAC leader to receive and fill requests by the standard state-to-state Req 'A' contract, send out broadcasts and function as the liaison with all Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) in the EOC.

Response was still a major priority, but we also began thinking of the second phase—recovery. Most of the Req A work we did during my time in Louisiana was to process extensions on existing Req As until Oct. 22 when the 100 percent FEMA reimbursement would end. After that date the state would have to match 25 percent.

I learned several valuable lessons from

my deployment. Each state needs to have a designated EMAC Disaster Coordinator to function as the state liaison for all state-to-state mutual aid during EMAC deployments. It would be a good recommendation that this person have extensive disaster response and/or exercise experience. This person should be levelheaded, a good decision maker and be able to work well under extreme pressure with limited time to make accurate decisions.

State, county and city emergency managers or designees need training in EMAC procedures.

Reimbursement procedures need to be made clearer by an EMAC contract or Req A (for example: overtime-plus benefits,

rental car, lodging, per diem, cell phones, laundry, miscellaneous, etc.).

It needs to be spelled out clearer to states and local jurisdictions that EMAC and FEMA are different. EMAC is state-to-state mutual aid and must have a presidential declaration prior to deployment.

Self-deployments are unacceptable. For example, during the beginning of Hurricane Katrina Louisiana had over 150 missions filled without any Req A contracts or mission requests. The requesting state is not required to reimburse in these situations and in Louisiana's case some may not.

Be certain when filling requests that personnel can really function in that position and not just fill the hole. In addition, the requesting state needs to be very specific as to the type of experience and training this person must have. For example, Critical Incident Stress Management Teams (CISM) are crucial after a man-made or natural disaster and should not come from the office, but should clearly have experience in dealing with the anxiety and stress that is experienced after the loss of life and/or property.

Reports From The Field

The Jefferson Parrish Communications Center needed help because many of their call takers and dispatchers were missing after the mandatory evacuation of the city and surrounding area. Upon landing in New Orleans, the Utah dispatchers immediately noticed the lack of other planes landing or taking off and the emptiness of the airport. From that point on, everywhere they went or looked there was visible damage to structures and piles of debris along the roadside.

The Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office (JPSO) Communications Center is a two-story building with a fenced and gated secure yard. National Guardsmen were stationed at the entry to provide security. JPSO staff was largely living at the center because

Please See *Dispatchers*, Page 6

Dept. of Public Safety—Communications Bureau

Kathy Olsen, Manager (Box Elder Communications Center)
 Scott Wolford, Manager (Cedar Communications Center)
 Chris Ruekert, Supervisor (Salt Lake Communications Center)
 Geri Tew, Communications Operator (SL Communications Center)
 Ian Borders, Communications Operator (SL Communications Center)
 Lindsay Larson, Communications Operator (SL Comm. Center)
 Jennifer Harrison, Communications Operator (Vernal Comm. Center)
 Marcy Willits, Communications Operator (Richfield Comm. Center)

EMAC Assignment: Dispatch

Location: Jefferson Parish Communications Center
 (Marrero, Louisiana)

Deployment Dates: 9/17/05-9/23/05



Ron Gloschen

Special Projects
 Division of Homeland Security
 Office of Emergency Services

EMAC Assignment: EMAC A-Team

Location: Jackson, Mississippi

Deployment Dates: 9/13/05-9/29/05

My beginning assignment was to work in a planning position. There were seven on the team for the first few days. We were working in the Mississippi Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Jet lag, travel and lack of sleep were a challenge the first couple of days.

Accountability and documentation was the biggest concern of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) operations supervisor who was working this event. Accountability came into play with the possibility of another hurricane and became obvious when Hurricane Rita was threatening.

It was important that the A-Team knew exactly who was deployed and to what location. We did build an accountability form with contact points and phone numbers so we could contact EMAC deployed personnel with evacuation orders. As it turned out, rains were heavy and tornadoes did occur, but Rita was not as big a concern as she could have been.

Lodging and rental cars were problematic in Jackson with some EMAC personnel arriving with no accommodations. Some assigned to Jackson stayed in motels many miles away and others stayed in motels that were not up to standard.

Safety issues were also a concern. The Incident Action Plans specifically reminded folks working in the Joint Field Office (JFO) that walking in downtown Jackson is not a good idea, particularly after business hours.

Heavy security was present at the office building and parking garage. In general, security guards were observed around Jackson at many office buildings, hotels and grocery stores.

Work was fast and furious when I first arrived with many Req A's being generated. The creation of an Excel spreadsheet was useful. This spreadsheet caused us to double enter information into the spreadsheet and the EMAC Webpage but it was well worth the effort.

The EMAC website was slow at first and could not keep up with the need to enter information. Improvements were made by Sept. 23 so entries in the EMAC Web site matched the Excel spreadsheet. There were still some discrepancies that will need to be addressed between the two systems.

The disadvantage of the information on the web is that reports are not available to be printed or for the use of the EMAC team.

Some A-Team leaders had staff briefings at least once a day. This was a good practice and was an opportunity for all of us to talk about common issues, concerns of the day and future needs.

The need was identified early that one point of contact needed to be established for each discipline that would have the authority to request additional resources. Generally, the single point of contact was the person working the Emergency Support Function (ESF) for the MEMA plan.

Many states established an EMAC desk to review and assist with EMAC requests. A few of these states ran around-the-clock operations. But for the most part, state contacts were not available after hours.

A color-coded system was implemented after my deployment was complete to identify which states were in each time zone. This provided a visual way of knowing how early or how late to call a particular state.

In general, this was an excellent opportunity to help another jurisdiction and to gain knowledge and information that may help us at home. It is hard to imagine the devastation that occurred and the recovery work that is ahead.

Entire towns were destroyed and it will take years to rebuild some communities. As in all jurisdictions, there are special interest groups fighting for causes and any issue before the legislature will not be easy.

Many cities are without funds to pay for repairs and rebuilding and the state is rapidly running out of money. The cost of this event could reach into the billions in Mississippi alone.

Upcoming DHS Training Classes

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Course Name	Date	Location
CSEPP Hazmat Responder, Part 1	November 11-13	Camp Williams
Threat / Risk Assessment	November 15-17	Rampton Building
CSEPP Hazmat Responder, Part II	November 18-20	Camp Williams
Business Continuity Plan Training	November 18	Provo / Orem Chmbr of Comm.
CERT Train-the-Trainer	December 2-3	Camp Williams
Protect Your Business: Risk / Vulnerability Mgmt.	December 14	SLCC—Sandy
Chemistry for Emergency Responders	January 16-27	St. George

Register for classes online at www.des.utah.gov

Dispatchers

(Continued from page 5)

they had no home to which they could return. The male dispatchers were housed just off the dispatch floor in a conference room where they slept on cots or hammocks. The females stayed in a FEMA doublewide mobile home with three bedrooms set up behind the communications building. The females also slept on cots.

The Louisiana training officers met with the Utah staff on the first evening to implement a training schedule beginning at 6 a.m. the next day. The Utah dispatchers plugged in and worked alongside their counterparts from Louisiana. Training had been anticipated to take at least three days, but after one full day, the Utah dispatchers had learned the basic codes for the Computer-Aided-Dispatch (CAD) System and were fielding most calls with very little assistance. The 911 system was out of service because it was under water. The dispatchers had to revert to basic call taker interrogation techniques to obtain an address or location of those calling in.

Major Rick Moore, JPSO Communications Center Commander, began sending his staff on badly needed days off beginning Monday, Sept. 19. By Wednesday he was relying entirely on call takers from Utah. Only the floor supervisors and radio dispatchers remained in the center. The Utah dispatchers were touched and very

proud at this vote of confidence. Each one has mentioned this as a most rewarding life experience, and if necessary, would do it again. The internal reward of knowing you had helped was a bonus treasured by the Utah dispatchers.

The Louisiana dispatchers shared many of their personal stories while training the Utah dispatchers. One trainer told how she missed her three-year-old daughter. Her parents had taken her to another state for safety when she was activated for the hurricane alert. She talked about the mixed emotions she still had of knowing her duty was to stay behind, but wondering if her daughter really understood why she was not with her. She had taken on the extra job of cleaning the Communications Center. She said it helped her pass the time since she was not able to go to her home yet because of the damage. She missed her daughter, especially at bedtime, and hoped for two days off in a row so she could visit her. She talked about the barrage of telephone calls that she and her co-workers had answered before and after the storm. You could hear stories being told throughout the center of families that were displaced or missing and homes that they still could not visit.

One terrible common theme was how abandoned the Louisiana dispatchers felt when the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) personnel in the building next door loaded into vans to leave during the evacuation. No one communicated to the Communications Center staff that they

were the skeleton staff which were to be left behind. Major Moore was their hero because he did not leave them. No one from the parish checked on them for 17 days. Those dispatchers felt as though they were in a vacuum and their only information was coming from the media. Some of them got their first change of clothes after three weeks of around-the-clock service when Wal-Mart opened across the street.

On the afternoon of Thursday, Sept. 23 weather reports on Hurricane Rita predicted a north by northwest track, which would have put New Orleans on the east eyewall or "dirty" side of the storm. Panic began to rise among the communications center personnel.

This time, however, a representative from the sheriff's office came to speak with them. He said they had been neglected before, but he guaranteed them he would not let that happen again. He stopped by the center each day after that, if only to sit and chat. Late Thursday afternoon the order to evacuate New Orleans was issued. The Utah dispatchers spent the next 12 hours on the road experiencing what the citizens of the area had gone through during the Hurricane Katrina evacuation—no flights, long lines at gas stations, caravans of cars heading away and gridlock. Each of the dispatchers who went described their experience as life altering, but one they were glad they volunteered for and would volunteer for again.